

It lifts 15 million Americans out of poverty. In my home State of Ohio, if Social Security did not exist, almost half of seniors would live in poverty.

Looking forward, improving Social Security's adequacy is the best way to address the retirement crisis. That is why I am working with Senator HARKIN and Senator BEGICH and Senator HIRONO and Senator SCHATZ on the Strengthening Social Security Act.

My colleagues will talk about strengthening Social Security, but what do they mean by that? They usually mean that strengthening Social Security means we make cuts in benefits. Those cuts in benefits can be raising the retirement age, it can be something called the chained CPI, which is cutting the Social Security cost-of-living adjustment. It can mean some kinds of means testing, so people get less, if they are a little wealthier. It can mean a whole host of things, but each of them is a cut to Social Security.

So the debate here seems to be not: How do we make seniors' lives better—when a third of seniors on Social Security get almost all their income from Social Security. And they are not doing that great with Medicare either. With some of the copays and the deductibles and all that, some get some help that way. But the debate should not be all about cutting Social Security—which it really is, this whole strengthening. We have to strengthen Social Security, is the way they talk about it. We have to reform entitlements. We have to worry about the sustainability of Social Security and Medicare, and I do worry about them. But the fix is not to debate cutting these programs and giving these seniors less.

As the Presiding Officer knows, defined pension benefits are less than they used to be. Fewer and fewer people retiring now have defined pension benefits. Unless they have a government job or a good union job, fewer and fewer have retirement benefits. Fewer people are able to save money because we know in the last decade savings rates have gone down because incomes—while the wealthy have done better and better and better, profits have gone up and up and up, productivity in the workforce has gone up and up and up—wages have decoupled with that. They have not kept up. That means people are saving less.

So originally as to Social Security, you would have Social Security, you would have a pension, and the third of the three-legged stool is you had savings. Well, now the savings and the pension—whether it is a 401(k) or a defined pension—are less than they used to be. So Social Security is more important.

So why are we even discussing the whole idea of cutting Social Security? That is why we need a fairer COLA to start with. The Harkin bill would formalize a Consumer Price Index for the Elderly that calculates the Consumer

Price Index, the cost-of-living adjustment, not the way it does now—a 40-year-old in the workplace—it calculates it based on a 70-year-old who is retired. A 40-year-old in the workplace has a very different set of expenses for their standard of living than does a 70-year-old. Obviously, the 40-year-old spends less on health care, on the average, than the 70-year-old, on the average, spends on health care. So we should calculate the cost-of-living adjustment that way.

That is not what so many people in this body want to do. There is just something about a bunch of Members of Congress, who have good salaries, who have good taxpayer-financed health care, making decisions to cut Social Security and cut Medicare.

I will close with this because I know Senator SHAHEEN is scheduled to speak and I will not take much longer.

But I hear these self-appointed budget hawks, most of whom will not be relying—almost none of whom, colleagues here, will be relying—on Social Security to make ends meet in their retirement. I take a back seat to nobody in what we do about budget cuts because I have been involved with a lot of colleagues on both sides of the aisle on how we deal with budget deficits. But when you hear these self-appointed fiscal hawks, these so-called wise men—and they are mostly men—talking about how we need to reform entitlements, scratch a little deeper. Ask them what they mean by that. They will probably say: Well, we can't sustain this. Ask them: Well, what do you mean by that? Then they will probably say: Well, we need structural reform. Ask them: Well, what do you mean by that? Ask them the question—what do they really mean? What is their idea? Their idea, almost always, is either raise the retirement age or cut benefits in some ways, cut the cost-of-living adjustment, something like that.

I will close with this. As to that townhall I was attending in Youngstown, I was there 3 years ago at a townhall, and a woman stood up and said: I have two jobs, both \$9 or \$10 an hour jobs. I have worked all my life this hard. She said: Do you know what. I am 63 years old. I just have to find a way to stay alive until I am 65—just for another year and a half—so I can have health insurance.

Imagine. This is a woman living right on the edge. She will not have much from Social Security. She has no savings. She just wanted to stay alive until she got health insurance.

That is why it matters so much what we do on social insurance, why it matters that we protect Medicare—really protect Medicare, not protect it by privatizing it. And it really matters why we protect Social Security and not “strengthen” the program by cutting the benefits. That is why our work matters. That is why it is so important we pass the Harkin-Begich-Hirono-Schatz-Brown bill.

Mr. President, I yield the floor to the Senator from New Hampshire.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the period for morning business be until 7 p.m. for debate only.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ENDA

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, almost 50 years ago Congress passed the Civil Rights Act. This landmark legislation prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, and gender in employment, housing, and public accommodations. Many of us in the Senate remember the passage of that legislation. And many of us, unfortunately, saw firsthand the painful examples of legally sanctioned discrimination that existed before the Civil Rights Act.

I grew up in a State where I went to segregated schools. I can remember the separate drinking fountains and going to the movie theater where if you were an African American you had to sit in the balcony. These practices were wrong, and they ended because of the Civil Rights Act.

Well, this week the Senate has the opportunity to extend our national quest for equal opportunity for all by passing the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. This legislation simply prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, and I give great credit to JEFF MERKLEY for sponsoring this legislation and for pushing for it.

I was proud as Governor of New Hampshire 16 years ago to sign legislation making New Hampshire only the 10th State in the country to include sexual orientation in its antidiscrimination laws. That State legislation went further than the bill before the Senate this week. It not only covered employment, but it covered housing and public accommodations as well. At the time, both the New Hampshire Senate and House were controlled by Republicans. Yet the bill passed both bodies with large bipartisan majorities because it was not seen then as a partisan issue.

Including sexual orientation in New Hampshire's antidiscrimination laws was just one more step forward in New Hampshire's long history of promoting civil rights. No one in America should be hired or fired because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

I realize, as we all do, that no law can erase prejudice. Prejudice will continue to exist after the Employment Non-Discrimination Act becomes law. But that is not the issue. The issue is whether it is acceptable as a matter of law in the United States to hire or fire

someone because of sexual orientation or gender identity.

When we declared our independence from Great Britain back in 1776, our Founders stated:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. . . .

Of course, I would add women to that. But equality under the law is part of our national creed. We have an opportunity this week to take another step forward in advancing equal opportunity for all. Let's pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act with a very strong bipartisan majority. I hope we will do that. I hope we will do it this week.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO MAYOR EVA GALAMBOS

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I rise for a moment, the day after elections all over the country, to pay tribute to a great Georgian.

Yesterday, November 5, 2013, the city of Sandy Springs elected a new mayor by the name of Rusty Paul. But Rusty was elected to succeed Eva Galambos, the first and only mayor of Sandy Springs, GA—an outstanding citizen of our State and a real representative of what it is about to be a good citizen of Georgia.

For 30 years she chaired a committee called the Committee for Sandy Springs, from 1975 until 2005. That committee was a committee of community members in an unincorporated area who wanted to have their own city, their own government, and they wanted to privatize government.

They tried for 30 years to get the State legislature—for 20 of those years I was a part of that legislature—to approve a municipal charter for Sandy Springs. Finally, in 2004, the legislature did. In 2005, it was ratified by the voters of Sandy Springs and the voters of the city of Atlanta, and Sandy Springs became a city.

Because Eva had chaired the committee to make it a city for 30 years, she was selected as its first mayor and served in that capacity for 8 outstanding years. A city that was a typical urban sprawl, suburban sprawl city, she turned into one of the prettiest places in Georgia. She beautified the streets, put in streetscapes, easements for beautification.

Today, we have a beautiful linear park on the most major road that goes through Sandy Springs, on Johnson Ferry Road and Abernathy—a linear park where people are able to enjoy a park and have a buffer from a highway,

yet improved traffic flowing through that community.

That was just one of many things she did in innovative ways to make it a better community.

Eva is a great citizen. She has a wonderful husband, three great children, six great grandchildren, but her seventh grandchild is the city of Sandy Springs. She birthed it. She led it. She grew it. At the end of this year she will leave it as its mayor, but she will always be there as its leading citizen.

So I rise today on the floor of the Senate to pay tribute to Eva Galambos for doing the American dream—having a dream, 30 years working to achieve it, and at the end of those 30 years then leading it to become what she always hoped it could be: a great city, the city of Sandy Springs, GA.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized for up to 8 minutes, followed by Senator BALDWIN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EMPLOYMENT NON-DISCRIMINATION ACT

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to vote for ENDA, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. This bill is about basic fairness, and it is really about the Golden Rule—treating others as you would like to be treated. Every single American should have the right to earn a living and provide for his or her family without fearing discrimination in the workplace because of who they are and whom they love. Americans like Marty Edwards, an assistant vice president of First National Bank of Granbury, Texas, whose story was recently featured in *The Advocate*. Marty was passed over for promotions at work despite a very strong 11-year history at the bank. When he asked for an explanation from his vice president and human resources department, he was told that the workers who had received the promotion were “a better fit for the image we are looking for.” Marty Edwards was hired by the bank right out of college. He formed his professional identity there. He was moving up the ladder until he came out as a gay man. When Edwards asked whether his sexual orientation was the main reason he had been denied promotion, the bank's executive vice president demanded his resignation. Edwards refused, and then he was fired.

Sadly, Marty Edwards' story is not unique. Between 15 and 43 percent of

LGBT people have experienced discrimination in the workplace or harassment in the workplace as a result of their sexual orientation. Twenty-six percent of transgender people report having been fired from their jobs because of their gender identity, and 90 percent reported experiencing harassment, mistreatment, or discrimination.

Our fellow citizens need ENDA. I was here when ENDA was voted on so many years ago when it was a Ted Kennedy bill. We did not make it then, but I think we are going to make it now because Americans know that ENDA is the right thing to do. As a matter of fact, 80 percent of Americans assume there already is a law prohibiting discrimination against this community. But more than half of Americans still live in States where it is perfectly legal to fire a lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender American just because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. So that is why we need this bill. There are many States where there is no protection. This bill would make sure the protections are nationwide.

Seventy percent of the American public supports ENDA. According to the Washington Post, public support ranges from a high of 81 percent in Massachusetts to a low of 63 percent in Mississippi. So it is clear that the support cuts across party affiliation and generational gaps. Whether they are a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, whether they are a libertarian, whether they are young or old, Americans overwhelming support this bill. The American people are basically giving us a message: This is a no-brainer. We should not have to fight about it. We should just vote for it.

That is why I was so dismayed to read that House Speaker BOEHNER said he would not support ENDA. His reason was that it will increase litigation. Does the Speaker really think that LGBT Americans, who have families to support and bills to pay, would rather pursue frivolous lawsuits than earn their pay in a workplace free of harassment and discrimination?

Here is what I think is really disingenuous about that. Republicans do not suggest that all the other groups covered by the Civil Rights Act are filing frivolous lawsuits. In other words, all the rest of Americans who are protected because of their religion, because of their color, because of their creed, Speaker BOEHNER says they are not filing frivolous lawsuits and he does not want to repeal the civil rights of those people. Good. Why does he think that the LGBT community is going to file frivolous lawsuits?

I have to say that evidence shows what he is saying is false. The Speaker ignores the fact that the Government Accountability Office issued a recent report showing that in the 22 States that banned sexual orientation discrimination in the workplace, “there were relatively few employment discrimination complaints based on sexual orientation and gender identity